would need about 369 aircraft over the next twenty years. It is not possible to state the likely cost as this will depend on the type of aircraft, market fluctuations etc.

Competition of IA with private companies

2677. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines is facing tough competition from private companies like Air Sahara;

(b) whether Government are aware that Air Sahara is likely to add 22 new aircrafts to its fleet;

(c) whether Government are aware that the private airlines are giving better services and comforts to their passengers; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to streamline the working of Indian Airlines to enable it perform at economically viable level while competing with private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has recently permitted M/s. Air Sahara to import eight CRJ-200 (50 seater) and four CRJ-700 (70 seater) aircraft on dry lease basis.

M/s. Air Sahara has also submitted a proposal for import of two B-737-700 (136 seater) and two B-737-800 (168 seater) aircraft on dry lease basis.

(c) and (d)The performance and services provided by Indian Airlines is comparable in all respects to those of private airlines. Indian Airlines constantly endeavours to improve its financial and operational performance by optimizing utilization of its resources. Some of the measures taken by Indian Airlines in this regard are as under:—

(1) Comprehensive budgetary control system

(2) Cost benefit analysis

(3) Introduction of 'Flexi Fare Policy'

(4) Yield management/rationalization.

(5) Better fleet & other resource utilization.

(6) Improvment in quality of products/customer services

(7) Marketing Initiatives.

International services from Madurai

2678. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to make Madurai Airport as an International Airport as it is closer to many of the towns in Southern parts of Tamil Nadu than Tiruchirapalli; and

(b) whether any international airlines have opted to operate from Madurai?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No International Airline has shown their interest to operate international flights from Madurai airport.

Hand -Trolleys at Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel Airport, Gujarat

†2679. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1399 given in the Rajya Sabha on 30th July, 2002 and state the reasons for not changing so far the hand-trolleys at the Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel International Airport situated in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): The hand trolleys at the Sardar Vallab Bhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad are expected to be replaced by the end of January, 2003.The slight delay has occured as the prototype manufactured had to undergo further rigorous tests before being cleared for bulk production. This clearance has been given in November, 2002.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.